

The Family Heritage Series

A weekly discussion of Americanist truths and traditions for those "heirs of all the ages" who will have to preserve that most important inheritance of all — freedom. Produced by the Movement To Restore Decency.



Volume II

Lesson Seventy-One

Karl Marx

LESSON IDEA

To describe the background and character of the man known as the "father of Communism" and to dispel the myth that the *Communist Manifesto* was the product of his "brilliant" mind.

PREPARATION

Read "During the Week" and adapt the project suggested to the needs of your family. Also, look up in your family *Bible* some of the teachings of the Book of Proverbs or the New Testament gospels which deal with parental discipline and an individual's character and training.

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«JENNY! IF WE CAN but weld our souls together, then with contempt shall I fling my glove in the world's face, then shall I stride through the wreckage a creator!" Thus read the impassioned proposal of marriage from a pretentious college student of a respected middle-class German family to the daughter of the aristocratic Baron von Westphalen. The student's name was Karl Marx; and although he never succeeded in his lifelong ambition of striding through the world as a creator, he did fling his glove of contempt in the world's face by serving a revolutionary movement that has brought untold suffering, misery, and death to millions of human beings.

Karl Heinrich Marx was born in Treves (or Trier), in what is now the Rhineland of Germany, on May 5, 1818. His ancestors had been outstanding scholars and rabbis. And although his father had broken with the Jewish faith, the story that Karl Marx was born in squalor and poverty is a colossal fraud — like so much that is accepted as fact by both his supporters

and his opponents. His father was a successful lawyer who could never understand or discipline his egocentric, ruthless son, but who did send him to the finest schools and universities of the day and who continued to supply him with money, like a schoolboy, even after Karl was an adult with a wife and children.

In his youth, Marx was known as an assertive, opinionated, and obstinate boy who, through his arrogance and cold indifference, drove away everyone who tried to be his friend. His father often apologized for Karl's behavior by saying the boy was "gifted" and, therefore, naturally "different," but do you think this excuses rudeness in a young man? What does this tell us about the character of Karl's father? [*Encourage a discussion of parental responsibilities. Raise the question of whether more or less discipline is needed for those of above average mental abilities.*]

Young Marx was a top student through the lower grades of school. By the time he entered college, however, his success in discussions and debates outshone his scholastic abilities. And once he discovered his talent for persuading others, he became a voracious reader, devouring huge quantities of books on almost any subject that could prove useful in arguments — regardless of their value to his classroom studies.

Although he was quickly accepted at the University of Bonn, almost immediately upon his arrival he began skipping classes and ignoring the required studies. He preferred, instead, the company of bohemian companions at local taverns. Although his father was suffering a terminal illness that drained

